



# **common ground**

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**ISSUE 235**

## **Year of the Rabbit**

**Healthy hearts**

**15 GMO years**

**Allergies raw deal**

**Love in Action**

**Marianne Williamson**

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**Publisher & Senior Editor** - Joseph Roberts  
**Managing Editor** - Sonya Weir  
**Advertising Sales** - Joanne Fleming, Adam Sealey, Phil Watson  
**Design & Production** - www.perubluesky.ca  
**Proofing** - Anthony Prosk

## Contributors:

Robert Alstead, Steve Anderson, Alan Cassels, Krystyna Chocyk-Wasiatycz, Niels Harrit, Carolyn Herriot, Larry James, Devrah Lavall, Ivy Li, Mac McLaughlin, Vesanto Melina, Faisal Moola, Geoff Olson, Gwen Randall-Young, Lucy Sharratt, David Suzuki, Eckhart Tolle, Marianne Williamson

**Sales** - Head office 604-733-2215  
 toll-free 1-800-365-8897

## Contact Common Ground:

Phone: 604-733-2215

Fax: 604-733-4415

Advertising: joanne@commonground.ca  
 adam@commonground.ca  
 philwatson.cg@gmail.com

Editorial: editor@commonground.ca

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photo by Wimclaes | Dreamstime.com

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## Inventing a market for lung disease

### Pharma plays will leave you breathless

I've got an idea for a study. I don't think it's been done yet, but it would be fairly simple to do. It would involve analyzing educational and marketing materials targeting doctors. I would amass a sample of articles from medical journals, physicians' educational events and pharmaceutical advertising – covering a wide array of diseases – and I would look for the presence of two keywords: "underdiagnosis" and "undertreatment." I would count how often those words or themes show up, noting how they are used and the messages they carry.

I think this study would allow me to say with certainty the concepts of underdiagnosis and undertreatment are among the most commonly used words wielded by those wanting to manipulate our physicians.

It's all about shaping physicians' behaviour. One way is to get them to imagine the guilt they would feel if they were not finding and treating a patient's medical condition because that is the basis of what doctors do: they diagnose and treat disease. This concept gets drummed into them in medical school and throughout

Besides guilt-tripping doctors into offering spirometry tests, COPD drug makers know they need to raise public awareness of spirometry screening to get patients asking for it.

their training and practices it becomes the basis for how others judge their professional competence. 'Diagnosing and treating' is their mantra, work ethic and remunerative system all in one.

And if you are a marketer who can infer that physicians as a group aren't 'diagnosing and treating' your disease, they will be putty in your hands. One recent example that sparked me to consider a study of the phenomenon of 'underdiagnosis and undertreatment' was a recent column in the *British Medical Journal* by Glasgow physician Dr. Desmond Spence.

Dr. Spence describes seeing an email flier advertising a "high level" professional seminar on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which featured members of the Department of Health and a "collection of baronesses, lords, professors and members of parliament." The seminar included support and speakers from some of the major drug companies that make drugs for COPD. He surmised it was likely a thinly veiled politico-medico lobbying affair revolving around how physicians and public health authorities in the UK were dealing with (or not) the millions of people undiagnosed with COPD.

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According to COPD patient groups, COPD is the fourth biggest killer on the planet yet millions of people don't even know they have COPD, which involves damaged airways and difficulty breathing. Sadly, these silent COPD sufferers go untreated and undiagnosed. The largest cause of COPD is tobacco use, though some people also get it from breathing in lung irritants over time. If there is an epidemic of COPD, it's because too many people smoke. But is that still true? All the trends indicate that rates of smoking and even childhood asthma have been dropping for decades.

Many large drug companies, such as Pfizer and Boehringer Ingelheim, sell billions of dollars worth of respiratory drugs. The companies' investors expect the executives to "grow the market" for their products, but therein lies the dilemma: how do you "grow the market" for drugs for lung disease when there is a limited and shrinking supply of smokers and people likely to get COPD?

Well, besides flooding doctors with the 'underdiagnosed and undertreated' message, there's screening your doctor can do. And in order to identify and treat the "missing millions," it's necessary to get younger, and otherwise healthier people, to start asking their doctor for screenings.

Screening for COPD is performed using spirometry, a test in which you blow into a machine that calculates the amount of air the lungs can hold and the rate that air can be inhaled and exhaled. Your results are then compared with those of healthy individuals of similar gender, race, height and age.

Sounds useful, but is it for everybody? Depends on whom you ask. According to the US Preventative Services Task Force (USPSTF), probably the most authoritative group in the world on screening tests, "The benefits of screening individuals without symptoms of COPD are very small" and you would need to screen about 400 adults between 60 and 69-years-old in order to identify "a single patient who may later develop COPD symptoms severe enough to require immediate medical care." For younger people, you'd have to screen a vastly greater number.

The USPSTF warns that spirometry can "substantially overdiagnose COPD in people over the age of 70 who have never smoked and can produce some false positives in younger adults."

This pretty well captures what Dr. Spence told me when I called him at his home in Glasgow. He said that, despite the drive to diagnose and treat COPD, "There is no evidence that screening people with mild disease will alter the progression of the disease." Yet, in one study of healthy adults, as many as 35% of healthy elderly over the age of 70 years who underwent a spirometry test received a label of "stage I COPD." Now what?

These patients are likely to be counselled to quit smoking, but they are also likely to be offered respiratory drugs – perhaps an anticholinergic such as Atrovent (ipratropium bromide) or Spiriva (tiotropium). These drugs might be beneficial for those with serious COPD, but for those with "early COPD?" There's little evidence that giving drugs to those people will improve their outcomes. Side effects of the anticholinergics include oral thrush (a yeast infection of the mouth), easy bruising and dry mouth. The more rare and serious complications include fractures, sudden death and heart attacks.

Besides guilt-tripping doctors into offering spirometry tests, COPD drug makers know they need to raise public awareness of spirometry screening to get patients asking for it.

One such campaign in the US, calling itself an "unbranded knowledge center for patients" is [www.KnowCOPD.com](http://www.KnowCOPD.com). Funded by Boehringer and Pfizer and a few COPD associations, the site features the classic five-question, self-administered quiz known as the "COPD Population Screener™," which starts with the slogan: "24 million Americans may have COPD, but only half have been diagnosed with it." You dutifully fill in your answers, print out the results and give it to your doctor at your next visit.

If the marketing has been effective, by now, your bedraggled physician, weary of being flogged with the 'underdiagnosed and undertreated' COPD message coming at him from all sides, won't have any energy left to explain how a spirometry test is an utter waste of time for a healthy 40-year-old and he'll just give in and order the test.

You get my point. The business models of the world's major drug manufacturers depend on guilt-tripping our doctors into ordering tests, schmoozing politicians to pay for them and bamboozling innocent consumers to demand them. Tests will then be ordered, unnecessarily medicalizing and stigmatizing many people at low risk for a disease, with many people potentially ending up on a drug that might not help and, in fact, could hurt them.

What a business this is. Whether we like it or not, many diseases are being subtly reconfigured as 'undertreated and underdiagnosed' epidemics. Des Spence says 'underdiagnosis and undertreatment' drives the inappropriate behaviour of physicians in a way that is a "disfigurement and distortion of healthcare."

"This is the theft of wellness," he writes, and I can't help but heartily agree. [www.knowcprd.com](http://www.knowcprd.com)

Alan Cassels is a drug policy researcher at UVic and is working on a book on screening. Have you been screened for something and have a story to tell? Let him know at [cassels@uvic.ca](mailto:cassels@uvic.ca)



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# Arthritis, allergies & raw food diets



Nutrispeak Vesanto Melina MS, RD

HEALTH

**C**an changing your diet help with symptoms of arthritis or fibromyalgia? Research shows that a change in diet can definitely help some people with these conditions. I am pleased to see the Arthritis Society's online material now mentions Scandinavian studies that show links between diet and an improvement in health.

At this point, the research is limited and the groups studied are small (typically fewer than two dozen people). Below is a summary of the findings from Finland, Sweden and the US:

## Fasting

When people fasted, their symptoms of rheumatoid arthritis decreased. Of course, fasting is not a choice you can adopt for long. Your symptoms will vanish – but so will you! However, the decreased symptoms did alert researchers to the possibility that certain food culprits can trigger reactions. The list included dairy products, wheat and other gluten-containing grains, animal products, nightshades (potatoes, tomatoes, peppers) and citrus fruits. Trigger foods were not the same for every person.

## Rheumatoid arthritis and vegan diets free of trigger foods

When people adopted vegan diets that were free of all of the foods listed above, more than half of the participants reported reduced shoulder pain and improved flexibility and quality of life.

You might wonder what they ended up eating. Participants' diets consisted of plenty of vegetables (apart from those in the nightshade family), fruits

(apart from citrus), gluten-free 'grains' (such as oats, buckwheat, quinoa, rice, wild rice and millet) and beans, peas and lentils. People did lose a little weight, but they considered this a bonus. At the end of the study, a number of people continued with their new food regimen, whereas those who returned to their non-vegetarian way of eating experienced a return of symptoms. In Finnish studies, participants had 'living food' raw diets, with plenty of sprouted foods. These people experienced reduced morning stiffness, joint swelling, pain and other symptoms. Lab tests and X-rays provided objective evidence of some improvements.

## Fibromyalgia and vegan diets free of trigger foods

A US study of people with fibromyalgia found that 75 percent showed improvement when they ate mostly vegan and raw foods. In Finland, those on 'living food' diets had better pain scores and less morning stiffness. Symptoms returned for those who returned to their standard diet.

## Reasons why gluten-free, vegan diets are beneficial for arthritis and fibromyalgia

Researchers propose these diets:

- are rich in anti-inflammatory and antioxidant compounds.
- are low in inflammatory compounds and pro-oxidants.
- eliminate foods such as wheat (gluten) and dairy products that commonly trigger sensitivity reactions.
- change our intestinal bacteria so that we have more



photo © Marius Jasaitis | Dreamstime.com

'friendly bacteria' that support health.

- generally result in weight loss, taking stress off joints.

Many questions arise. Can we survive on such diets or enjoy them? To derive a benefit, must our diet be 100 percent raw? Are cooked foods toxic? What does a nutritionally adequate raw diet look like? For answers, I invite you to visit the Wellness Show (February 18-20) in Vancouver. See sidebar.

## Raw food @ The Wellness Show

The Wellness Show runs February 18-20 at the Vancouver Convention Centre, West Building Exhibit Hall C, 1055 Canada Place. [www.thewellnessshow.com](http://www.thewellnessshow.com)

## Raw food presentations

Saturday Feb. 19, 1:30pm: Raw Food Diets: What's True, What's Not? Sunday Feb. 20, 12:30pm: Food Allergies: Health and Healing. Come by booth 930 (The Book Publishing Company) and say hello. [K](#)

**References:** *Rheumatoid Arthritis Treated With Vegetarian Diets* by Dr. Jens Kjeldsen-Kragh. [www.nhe.net/jointpainrelief/7112.pdf](http://www.nhe.net/jointpainrelief/7112.pdf)

**Vesanto Melina** is co-author of **Food Allergies: Health and Healing, Becoming Raw, The Raw Food Revolution Diet** and the **Food Allergy Survival Guide**. [www.nutrispeak.com](http://www.nutrispeak.com)

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get the big picture



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## New Promising Treatment for Parkinson's Disease

### Botanical compound stimulates stem cells in neurological condition

Janet Thompson was having trouble brushing her teeth in the morning then she started having occasional tremors in her right hand. Not knowing what problem she had, she was referred to a neurologist that diagnosed her as having Parkinson's Disease. When she heard she had the disease she was devastated. She described what she felt as "I almost collapsed when I heard my diagnosis."

She became overwhelmed at the thought of not being able to live and function normally again. Worst, she would be seen in public as being handicapped, which created a tremendous insecurity for her and it didn't help her ability to function.

Parkinson's Disease is characterized by a loss of motor function that may include tremors, muscle rigidity, and postural instability. This disease is largely attributed to degeneration and death of nerve cells in a specific area of the brain called the substantia nigra, which is responsible for producing a neurotransmitter called dopamine.

Multiple mechanisms may be responsible for this loss of dopamine. But promising therapies have shown tremendous improvements in Parkinson's patients. Aside from the typical treatment of levodopa, dopamine agonists, and others, stem cell stimulation and differentiation into neuronal cells are other avenues researchers and doctors have quickly looked towards a cure for this disease.

"After doing my research and finding cures to my disease, I found ginseng saponins to be quite effective for

my condition. I no longer have my tremors!" states Janet Thompson.

### At Last, Some Great News!

With current bio-technology advances, ginseng saponins were extracted from ginseng and discovered to contain a stimulating factor for stem cell growth as one of its many functions along with being able to pass through the blood brain barrier. "When cultured in a medium containing ginseng saponins, neuronal stem cells actively proliferate," states chief scientist Johnny Chu, PhD, MD.

Ginseng saponins can stimulate neuronal stem cells to replace the dying neurons in hippocampal gyrus of normal or ischemic cerebrum, and they may induce differentiation of stem cells into neurons, astrocytes and glial cells. Therefore, cerebral function can be restored.

Only one company in the world contains a specialized patent to extract the saponins from ginseng in a highly concentrated form, called HS-CSF. The official clinic administering proprietary therapies containing HS-CSF is located in the lower mainland (Richmond) – **Careseng Naturopathic Medical Centre (CNMC).**

"We have been actively using this innovative agent as an herbal stem cell stimulating factor in over 15,000 cases. Ginseng saponins have been proved through clinical trials that it remarkably improves the multiplication of stem cells, and more importantly, it is safer and more effective when compared with other pharmaceutical drugs," states Dr. Brian Leung, ND (President and Clinic Director of CNMC).



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*"Having Parkinson's really caused me to stay at home and be afraid of going out in public. I eventually had depression, but after getting treated by Careseng, I'm back to being able to take my walks without fear."*

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Journal of TCM. 2007; 32(13):1310-3 ; Yao Xue Xue Bao. 2003; 38(10):735-8; Neurol Res. 2007;29(3):270-3 ; Neurol Res. 2004; 26(4):422-8; J Nat Prod. 2007 Aug; 70(8):1329-34; Acta Pharmacol Sin. 2005; 26(2):143-9.; \*Patient names were recreated for the production of this article.



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# healthbites

## It's Heart Month: eat more garlic!

by Krystyna Chocyk-Wasiatycz

In herbal lore, the humble garlic bulb has a huge reputation for curing almost everything from the common cold to the plague. Now, it has been shown to lower blood pressure. A new study out of Australia shows that aged extract of garlic might be able to help lower blood pressure in the 3.7 million Australians who suffer from hypertension.

A 12-week study of 50 people, conducted by Dr. Karin Ried from the University of Adelaide's Discipline of General Practice, showed that garlic could be used as a complement to conventional drugs for high and low blood pressure. The results of the study were published in the international health journal *\*Maturitas*, which focuses on midlife and elder health.

According to Dr. Ried, "There is a large proportion of people out there who are on medication and some people are on four different types but they still have high blood pressure; it is uncontrolled. When we gave them this garlic supplement

we were able, on average, to reduce their blood pressure under the hypertension threshold so garlic might be a good complementary treatment option to control hypertension. Raw, cooked and garlic powder aren't as effective as carefully aged garlic extract. You know what is in there and it is stable for a long period of time. Garlic powder is not as stable and you don't know the dose you are taking and garlic oil doesn't contain the active substance."



Dr. Ried's team found those with systolic blood pressure above 140 who took four aged garlic extract capsules each day experienced an average systolic blood pressure 10.2mmHg lower than the control group, who took a placebo.


Garlic is thought to have an antihypertensive effect because it stimulates production of nitric oxide and hydrogen sulphide, which helps relax blood vessels.

**References:** *Aged Garlic Extract Lowers Blood Pressure in Patients With Treated but Uncontrolled Hypertension: A randomized controlled trial*, 18 June 2010 Karin Ried, Oliver R. Frank, Nigel P. Stocks *Maturitas* October 2010 (Vol. 67, Issue 2, Pages 144-150)

Krystyna Chocyk-Wasiatycz is a researcher and a health food and wellness consultant.

## Garlic lore

Thousands of years ago, aged garlic extract preparations were recommended by physicians and used by common people for many of the health problems we experience today. One of the first recorded garlic preparations was made by Dioscorides, a Greek physician and pharmacologist in the first century. Long before the scientific understanding of circulation was established, he prescribed garlic preparations to clean the arteries. In 1971, a recipe for "the elixir of youth," a type of garlic extract preparation dating back to between the fourth and fifth century BC, was found by a UNESCO team in a Tibetan monastery.

Today, a growing body of scientific evidence validates the benefits of garlic and aged garlic extract as a powerful nutritional agent. Amongst other benefits, garlic eliminates accumulated fat in the body, removes insoluble calcium, improves metabolism, cleanses blood vessels, prevents heart attacks, arteriosclerosis, and paralysis, eradicates the sensation of buzzing from the head, improves vision and regenerates the entire body. 

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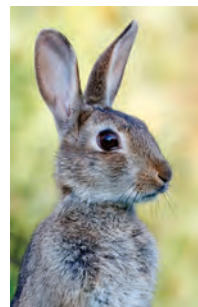
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# 2011 Year of the Rabbit

The Rabbit, also translated as Hare, is the fourth animal in the 12-year cycle of the Chinese zodiac. The Year of the Rabbit is associated with the earthly branch symbol.

Persons born within the date ranges below may be said to have been born in the Year of the Rabbit, while also bearing the following elemental signs:



- \* 29 January 1903 – 15 February 1904: Water Rabbit
- \* 14 February 1915 – 2 February 1916: Wood Rabbit
- \* 2 February 1927 – 22 January 1928: Fire Rabbit
- \* 19 February 1939 – 7 February 1940: Earth Rabbit
- \* 6 February 1951 – 26 January 1952: Metal Rabbit
- \* 25 January 1963 – 12 February 1964: Water Rabbit
- \* 11 February 1975 – 30 January 1976: Wood Rabbit
- \* 29 January 1987 – 16 February 1988: Fire Rabbit
- \* 16 February 1999 – 4 February 2000: Earth Rabbit
- \* 3 February 2011 – 22 January 2012: Metal Rabbit

Metal Rabbits – Years 1951 & 2011: Metal gives Rabbits more strength, resilience and determination. Metal Rabbits are more intense in their actions, whether they're work-related or romantic.

Water Rabbits – Years 1903 & 1963: Like the currents, Water Rabbits prefer to go with the flow, avoiding conflict at all costs, even in situations that are bothersome. It's easy to take advantage of Water Rabbits. They're very supportive of others.

Wood Rabbits – Years 1915 & 1975: Wood Rabbits occupy their time doing for others, always feeling the need to make others content. This generosity is easy for others to take advantage of and sometimes Water Rabbits don't even realize it is happening.

Fire Rabbits – Years 1927 & 1987: Fire adds spark to the Rabbit's personality and all that Fire Rabbits do. Fire compels Rabbits to seek new adventures. Prone to tantrums, Fire Rabbits prefer to avoid conflict.

Earth Rabbits – Years 1939 & 1999: Earth Rabbits are grounded in reality. Their advice can be harsh, but honest. Home life is important to Earth Rabbits as are money and material goods.

Personality: Occupying the 4th position in the Chinese Zodiac, the Rabbit symbolizes such character traits as creativity, compassion and sensitivity. Rabbits are friendly, outgoing and prefer the company of others. They also prefer to avoid conflict. In confrontational situations, Rabbits approach calmly and with consideration for the other party. Rabbits believe strongly in friends and family and a lack of such bonds can lead to emotional issues.

Their serene nature keeps Rabbits from becoming visibly upset. Because they're serene animals, Rabbits are easily taken advantage of. Their sensitive nature makes them shy away from aggressive or competitive situations. They're overall conservative and not interested in taking risks. Classy, sophisticated, expressive, well-mannered and stylish, those born under the Sign of the Rabbit enjoy learning about cultural issues and people from other countries. Rabbits are most comfortable being at home and their homes are always neat and organized. Home is also where Rabbits prefer to entertain. Rabbits are conservative in their decorating tastes. Rabbits should work at building more self-confidence and self-worth so they can feel more secure. The desire for remaining in safe, comfortable environments keeps Rabbits from taking risks which sometimes causes them to miss out on good opportunities.

Health: Even though Rabbits don't usually get visibly upset or stressed, they do tend to keep these feelings inside. When they don't express *continued p.22...*

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# Growing a gastroeconomy

**A**s we look to create greater food security by expanding regional food production, we will inevitably be drawn into new ways of making a living, something I refer to as the new “gastroeconomy.” This describes the myriad ways people can earn an income by putting more regionally produced food on the table.

There’s a great deal of room for expansion on Vancouver Island and the Coastal Islands where we currently produce no more than 5% of the food we consume. Even if we aimed at producing only 50% of our own food, we’d have a massive expansion of opportunities in the field of agriculture, both traditional and non-traditional (urban farming). There’s a lot of money to be made by growing a gastroeconomy, which not only feeds us, but also puts us on the map as a destination location for gourmet artisan foods. Once we have created the Vancouver Island Diet, everyone will benefit from the value-added spin-offs.

Making a living from the land has been given such a bad rap that many people have become skeptical about it being possible or worthwhile. Twenty years of experience has taught me not only can you make a good living from the land, but it also provides a good life. It’s hard work, which gets easier as the years go by, offering rewards over time that are well worth the effort.

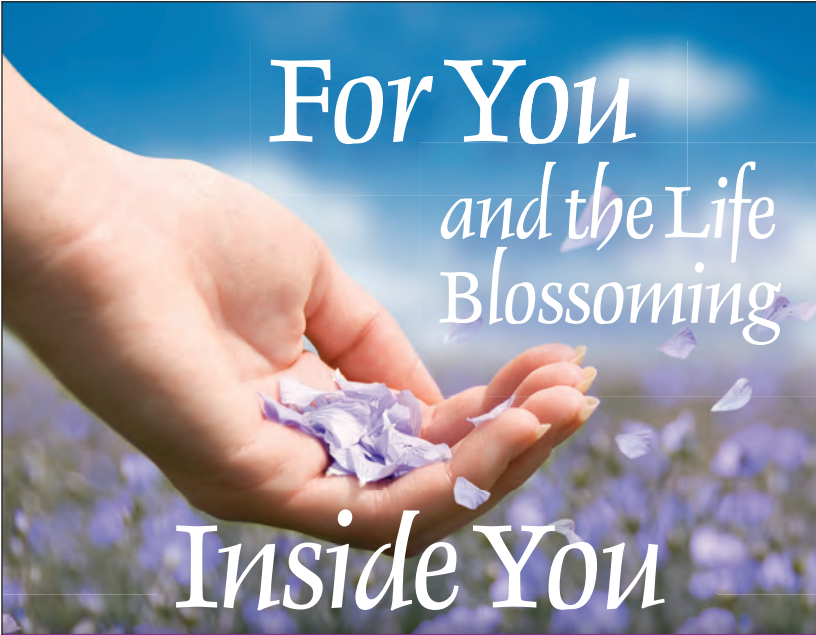
**Twenty years of experience has taught me not only can you make a good living from the land, but it also provides a good life.**

Many years ago I had to come up with a name for a business, which began when I borrowed one-quarter of an acre of land from a neighbour in town to grow food for my family. “The Garden Path” was the name I chose because everything I was then doing was connected to growing plants and planting gardens. After 10 years, my organic nursery business became so well known for its spring sale of heritage food plants and quarter-acre demonstration food garden that we had to expand to two and a half acres of agricultural land, 25 minutes away. The nursery expanded, as did the garden, and I grew more seeds for my certified organic seed business Seeds of Victoria.

From 15 feet of clay fill, we created a beautiful edible landscape that inspires visitors to grow food, without a word being said. The garden provides us with fruits, herbs, flowers and vegetables year round, the majority grown with seeds we have saved. As the garden developed so did the range of educational programs and workshops offered, which eventually led to me becoming a writer and author. All this from 15 feet of clay fill!

How can we change a culture that tells our young folk it’s futile to enter the world of farming? A restructuring of the whole system might help because there is very little investment or incentives for the next generation of farmers. We will need training, education and mentorship programs to encourage more people to get involved. We could support aging farmers and keep them on their farms by providing keen, young farmers to take over their work, for which we’d only have to change a few by-laws. We’d have to rebuild a supportive infrastructure, which has all but disappeared, for cooperatives, distributors, processors and packagers. When we begin to realize it’s not only about the money, but also about a quality of life, more farmers, foragers and fisherman will jump on board to get the gastroeconomy growing. ☒

**Carolyn Herriot** is author of **A Year on the Garden Path, a 52-Week Organic Gardening Guide** and **The Zero Mile Diet, a Year-round Guide to Growing Organic Food** (Harbour Publishing). She grows Seeds of Victoria at the Garden Path Centre in Victoria, BC. [www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/](http://www.earthfuture.com/gardenpath/)




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# The perfect relationship

A very wise meditation master once said, “The greatest suffering in the human form is that we are not seen as already perfect and divine.”

I’ve recently spoken with many people, all from very different cultures, who feel that they can no longer bear the conflict and pressure in their relationships. Such complaints are reflected in our divorce rates, which are



**When we can be the soul of the relationship we are in, when we can remember that this person whom we might be upset with just wants to be seen through the eyes of love, we can change the lens through which we are looking.**

unprecedented, and they beg the question “What is the real purpose of relationships?” Many people are coming to recognize that relationships based on externals such as sex or power or just not wanting to be alone, are like houses built on shifting sand. They won’t hold up when the waves and the storms come. The delirium of romance can be intoxicating, but once the honeymoon stage has passed, unless we deepen our connection to the real essence of Union, we will only flit to other partners, never experiencing the deep rewards arising from relationships based on true love.

The turmoil of personal relationships is exacerbated by stress arising from the acceleration of time and

the proliferation of technology and is reflected in the violence and wars in the world, and in the destruction of our planet. The Hindu scriptures speak about this age as Kali Yuga – the dark age of man or the age of quarrel and confusion. At such a time, all of our ego tendencies are amplified, which is problematic on one hand, but also poses a unique opportunity for our souls to evolve more rapidly than they would otherwise. Just as coal, when subjected to intense heat and pressure, can become a diamond, the human being, subjected to the intensity of Kali Yuga, can become one with the God Self, which is the true source of relationships.

Our soul work starts with the ones we love, the ones who know our deepest secrets and our worst fears. These close relationships are the primary stepping stones to learning how to love unconditionally. But bringing love and compassion to one another in these dark times is more easily said than done. Our insecurities, disappointments or expectations that the other person is responsible for our happiness can get in the way. No wonder we want to run from or push away the relationships that most strongly reflect our darkness.

Just as Kali Yuga is an opportunity for the individual soul to evolve, it is also an opportunity for our relationships to evolve as we learn to embrace one another and to have compassion for the human foibles we all share. Those who have been in long-term relationships know the rage, hatred and disconnection that can arise as we mirror each other’s deepest pain. How can we bridge such separation? How can we become one with those we love? How can we transcend the endless conflicts about finances, domestic routines and intimacy issues, never mind the cultural, religious and political disagreements that create even more reasons for us to push one another out of our hearts? Communicating our feelings about these things may not necessarily help if they are not shared in an openhearted way, or if the other is not ready to hear what we have to say.

Perhaps we can take our cue from the 13th century mystical poet, Jalaluddin Rumi, who said, “Wherever you stand, be the soul of that place.” This applies to our hearts as well as our physical surroundings. It express-

es the “perfect” relationship to others and to life itself. When we can be the soul of the relationship we are in, when we can remember that this person whom we might be upset with just wants to be seen through the eyes of love, we can change the lens through which we are looking. Instead of seeing only the problems and accompanying flaws in the other, we can see their inherent innocence and divinity.

We can often shift out of our dissatisfactions in relationships when we focus on what we are grateful for rather than on what is lacking. When we focus on our complaints, we will reinforce others’ shortcomings, but when we focus on love, gratitude and forgiveness, we empower the other. This applies not only to our personal relationships but to our world as well.

Another practice that helps transcend blame and hatred in relationships is to ask ourselves this question: “What part of me is he or she expressing right now?” This is an effective way to own the deficiencies we so often project onto others. None of us is free from darkness. This contemplation can help us develop compassion and love for the other because it reminds us of our own foibles.

Where there is love there is no ego. When we make our love stronger than our greed, we will be able to protect each other as well as our Earth. When we make our love stronger than our judgements, we will listen to and understand the unique beauty and intelligence in others. When we make our love stronger than our pride, we will see God in everyone, even our enemies. When we make our love stronger than our criticism, we won’t sweat the small stuff. When we make our love stronger than our doubt, we will never feel alone. We will have a constant relationship with the Perfect One, who knows our every thought, word and deed and is closer than our own breath. Every day, we will see the whole world and each person in it as a part of us and we will experience the sheer joy of being in the most perfect relationship of all.

**Devrah Laval** is author of *The Magic Doorway Into the Divine*. She is a spiritual counsellor and has facilitated groups and workshops for over 25 years. [www.themagicdoorway.com](http://www.themagicdoorway.com)

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# Be someone's valentine all year

**T**o be a special Valentine to your partner takes lots of energy, time, attention and love. Let's all give some thought about who we are being in our relationship, what we can do to make them better and who we will have to become to have them be healthy and successful. Let's make every day Valentine's Day for our partner.

**V for Validate:** Your relationship with your partner must be an equal partnership, one that mutually supports each other in their dreams and visions of what is best for one another. Make it a point to let your partner know that you value their opinions, ideas and especially their feelings.

**A for Attention:** Paying attention to the little things is not always easy. It takes practice and is one of the most important aspects of a successful and healthy love relationship. It is the little things that count. If left to simmer without attention, eventually they may erupt into major conflict.

**L for Love:** Be consistent in expressing your love for your partner in "words" and deeds. While the gift of a rose, a box of chocolates or a special greeting card is an expression of love, it is important for your love partner to hear the words, "I love you" at least once each day.

**E for Enjoy:** Make the best of being together. Be present when in the presence of your partner. Enjoy each precious moment. Couples who enjoy each other's company are happier and more satisfied with their relationship. Do fun things. Go fun places. Place a high priority on enjoying life together.

**N for Nurture:** To nurture is to nourish. Nourish one another with love. Encourage each other to openly communicate your needs. Accept your partner for who they are and support them in their individual needs and endeavours. Offer understanding by being an attentive listener. Acknowledge your partner's goodness!

**T for Time:** Spend "quality" time together. Make a promise to have a date with your mate no less than once each week. No excuses, please! Pretend you are on your very first date. Reminisce. Hold hands. Make eye contact. Talk. Really listen. Focus on your partner. Make each moment you are together count.

**I for Intention:** We usually get what we place our intention upon. Synergize your intentions on what you want, never on what you do not want. The combined effect of two partners working together on similar things is much greater than the sum of individual effects. Highlight your intentions to one another and concentrate on the specifics of those intentions.

**N for Needs:** We all have individual needs: to be loved, accepted, understood, trusted, respected, appreciated, encouraged and the list goes on. Acknowledging our needs and the needs of our love partner gives purpose to the relationship. Learn to express your needs in ways your partner can listen to and understand. Erich Fromm once said, "Immature love says, 'I love you because I need you.' Mature love says, 'I need you because I love you.'"

**E for Energize:** Breathe new life into your relationship each day by consistently focusing on new ideas that keeps the fire of love burning. Partners feel energized when both are dancing to the same tune.

To describe love is very difficult, for the same reason that words cannot fully describe the flavour of an orange. You have to taste the fruit to know its flavour. So with love. —Paramahansa Yogananda

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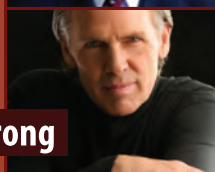
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# Conscious Parenting

Parents cannot let go of being a parent even when the child grows into an adult. They can't let go of the need to be needed by their child. Even when the adult child is 40-years-old, parents can't let go of the notion "I know what's best for you." The role of parent is still being played compulsively and so there is no authentic relationship. Parents define themselves by that role and are unconsciously afraid of loss of identity when they cease being parents. If their desire to control or influence the actions of their adult child is thwarted – as it usually is – they will start to criticize or show their disapproval or try to make the child feel guilty, all in an unconscious attempt to preserve their role, their identity. On the surface, it looks as if they were concerned about their child and they themselves believe it, but they are only really concerned about preserving their role-identity. All egoic motivations are self-enhancement and self-interest, sometimes cleverly disguised, even from the person in whom the ego operates.

A mother or father who identifies with the parental role may also try to become more complete through their children. The ego's need to manipulate others into filling the sense of lack it continuously feels is then directed toward them. If the mostly unconscious assumptions and motivations behind the parent's compulsion to manipulate their children were made conscious and voiced, they would probably include some or all of the following: "I want you to achieve what I never achieved; I want you to be somebody in the eyes of the world so that I too can be somebody through you. Don't disappoint me. I sacrificed so much for you. My disapproval of you is intended to make you feel so guilty



**Awareness is the  
greatest agent for change.**

and uncomfortable that you finally conform to my wishes. And it goes without saying that I know what's best for you. I love you and I will continue to love you if you do what I know is right for you."

When you make such unconscious motivations conscious, you immediately see how absurd they are. The ego that lies behind them becomes visible, as does its dysfunction. Some parents that I spoke to suddenly realized, "My God, is this what I have been doing?" Once you see what you are doing or have been doing, you also see its futility and that unconscious pattern then comes to an end by itself. Awareness is the greatest agent for change. If your parents are doing this to you, do not tell them they are unconscious and in the grip of the ego. That will likely make them even more unconscious because the ego will take up a defensive position. It is enough for you to recognize that it is the ego in them – that it is not who they are. Egoic patterns, even long-standing ones, sometimes dissolve almost miraculously when you don't oppose them internally.

Opposition only gives them renewed strength. But even if they don't, you can then accept your parents' behaviour with compassion, without needing to react to it, that is to say, without personalizing it. Be aware also of your own unconscious assumptions or expectations that lie behind your old, habitual reactions to them. "My parents should approve of what I do. They should understand me and accept me for who I am." Really? Why should they? The fact is they don't because they can't. Their evolving consciousness hasn't made the quantum leap to the level of awareness yet. They are not yet able to stop identifying with their role. "Yes, but I can't feel happy and comfortable with who I am unless I have their approval and understanding." Really? What difference does their approval or disapproval





truly make to who you are? All such unexamined assumptions cause a great deal of negative emotion, much unnecessary unhappiness.

Be alert. Are some of the thoughts that go through your mind the internalized voice of your father or mother, perhaps saying something like, “You are not good enough. You will never amount to anything” or some other judgment or mental position? If there is awareness in you, you will be able to recognize that voice in your head for what it is: an old thought, conditioned by the past. If there is awareness in you, you no longer need to believe every thought you think. It’s an old thought, no more. Awareness means Presence and only Presence can dissolve the unconscious past in you. “If you think you are so enlightened,” Ram Dass said, “go and spend a week with your parents.” That is good advice. The relationship with your parents is not only the primordial relationship that sets the tone for all subsequent relationships, it is also a good test for your degree of Presence. The more shared past there is in a relationship, the more present you need to be; otherwise, you will be forced to relive the past again and again.

If you have young children, give them help, guidance, and protection to the best of your ability, but even more important, give them space – space to be. They come into this world through you, but they are not “yours.” The belief “I know what’s best for you” may be true when they are very young, but the older they get, the less true it becomes. The more expectations you have of how their life should unfold, the more you are in your mind instead of being present for them. Eventually, they will make mistakes and they will experience some form of suffering, as all humans do. In fact, they may be mistakes only from your perspective. What to you is a mistake may be exactly what your children need to do or experience. Give them as much help and guidance as you can, but realize that you may also at times have to allow them to make mistakes, especially as they begin to reach adulthood. At times, you may also have to allow them to suffer. Suffering may come to them out of the blue or it may come as the consequence of their own mistakes.

Wouldn’t it be wonderful if you could spare them from all suffering? No, it wouldn’t. They would not evolve as human beings and would remain shallow, identified with the external form of things. Suffering drives you deeper. The paradox is that suffering is caused by identification with form and erodes identification with form. A lot of it is caused by the ego, although eventually suffering destroys the ego, but not until you suffer consciously. Humanity is destined to go beyond suffering, but not in the way the ego thinks.

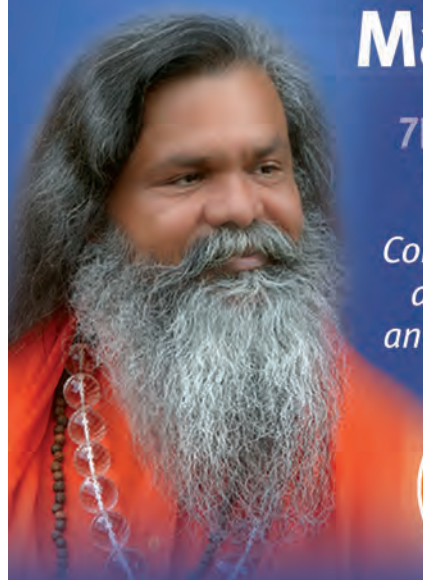
One of the ego’s many erroneous assumptions, one of its many deluded thoughts is “I should not have to suffer.” Sometimes, the thought gets transferred to someone close to you: “My child should not have to suffer.” That thought itself lies at the root of suffering. Suffering has a noble purpose: the evolution of consciousness and the burning up of the ego. The man on the cross is an archetypal image. He is every man and every woman. As long as you resist suffering, it is a slow process because the resistance creates more ego to burn up. When you accept suffering, however, there is an acceleration of that process which is brought about by the fact that you suffer consciously. You can accept suffering for yourself or you can accept it for someone else, such as your child or parent. In the midst of conscious suffering, there is already the transmutation. The fire of suffering becomes the light of consciousness.

The ego says, “I shouldn’t have to suffer” and that thought makes you suffer so much more. It is a distortion of the truth, which is always paradoxical. The truth is that you need to say yes to suffering before you can transcend it. ◀

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## StarWise February 2011

The Aquarius new moon takes place on February 2. A new moon signals a fresh round of activities that basically culminate around full moon time two weeks later. The moon acts like a trigger as she comes along and activates and stimulates planetary exchange and activity throughout the month. The condition and position of the planets at new moon time tell us what type of energy is on board. Mars sits close to the new moon and his energy will be evident throughout the month. On the positive side of the ledger, we may very well be inspired by the true spirit of Aquarius, which connects us to our higher selves and also reminds us of our common bonds as human beings. We all want to be loved and respected and we all deserve to be nurtured and protected. Mars brings courage and bravery of the highest kind and it may be needed in order to attain our goals of peace and prosperity. Saturn lends a hand. He is in a triangular pattern with the new moon. Saturn is the true lord of Aquarius and he is in Libra, his sign of exaltation, meaning that we will receive the best that Saturn has to offer. His lessons are often stringent, but necessary. The combination brings cooperation and accord.



### ARIES Mar 21 - Apr 19

Jupiter has just entered Aries with Uranus soon to follow. It is a clarion call announcing big changes are in the wind. Get a move on. This year may be your greatest ever. Reach for the stars, open your heart and embrace whatever the universe brings your way.



### CANCER Jun 21 - Jul 22

Your curiosity is piqued in some way. It is time to do your natural thing, which, of course, is to dig in and discover what you may. Joint monies, partnerships, inheritances and mysteries, romance too, all figure in the cosmic dance throughout February.



### TAURUS Apr 20 - May 21

Career opportunities and changes all around may be the case for Taurus. Once you start to really desire something, even if it means a big change, you will do it. Creative energies are high and you may be looking at re-evaluating many aspects of your life.



### LEO Jul 23 - Aug 22

February is the general solar low of the year for Leo. Your view, versus the view of others, comes into play. Sensitive negotiations take place. It is time to nurture and care for yourself and others. Humility, honesty, patience and compassion get you through in fine fashion.



### GEMINI May 22 - Jun 20

Your solar ninth house of travel, education, publishing and spirituality is strongly activated and it may prompt you to book a flight or sign up for classes, etc. Just beneath the exterior of your average Gemini whirlwind talker is a soul seeking liberation and spiritual ecstasy in one form or another. Great changes are coming.



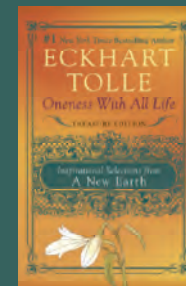
### VIRGO Aug 23 - Sep 22

Your solar sixth house is Aquarius and while the planets move through this region throughout February, you may be inspired to do your Virgo thing, which is to mainly get your ducks in a row. It's a no brainer. Health, work and everything in between get a work over.

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On the negative side of the coin, Mars offers war, anger and confrontation all the way around. All the more reason for us to take heed and strive to bring peace and understanding wherever we can. A cut from a sword will heal in a short time, but a cut from the tongue may fester for lifetimes. The full moon on February 18 will tell the tale. Mars is involved with the full moon and may shake things up locally and globally in boardrooms and bedrooms across the land. We know that changes are in the wind as evidenced by the reshuffling in our political parties that has jarred everyone awake from their deep slumber. Now we are experiencing the "Cardinal Onslaught." It means that the big planets – Saturn, Uranus and Pluto – are moving through the cardinal signs Aries, Libra and Capricorn and they will not abate throughout this decade as they affect the horoscopes of Canada and the US and the rest of the world. It tells of a time of great movement and change as we gradually shift away from our materialism and move towards a more meaningful spiritual existence. No doubt we need to balance things out across the board, and we will. Next month The Royals... and the fates are riding high. 

**Mac McLaughlin** has been a practising professional astrologer for more than 4 decades. His popular **Straight Stars** column ran in Canada's largest weekly magazine, the Georgia Straight, for 11 years. Email [mac@macsstars.com](mailto:mac@macsstars.com) or call 604-731-1109.



#### LIBRA Sep 23 - Oct 22

You are in the midst of an important transition. It won't let up so you might as well get into it, gladly so. No one wants to lance the cyst, but we're relieved once the toxins are removed. The planetary deities are paying close attention as they help you through this time of correction and redirection.



#### SCORPIO Oct 23 - Nov 21

When the going gets tough, the Scorpios get going. Where others give up, Scorpio is just getting warmed up. A major retooling is in the works and it is essential that you throw yourself into the process. Let the old you die off and the dynamic new you will appear on the scene soon enough!



#### SAGITTARIUS Nov 22 - Dec 21

Lord Jupiter casts his blessings as he visits your solar fifth house for the next four months. Romance, intellectual attainment, business opportunities and other such topics will do you well. Travel, education and spiritual upliftment are on the menu. Births take place literally or spiritually and possibly both.



#### CAPRICORN Dec 22 - Jan 19

Venus visits Capricorn throughout February bringing blessings of love, harmony and happiness. You may have to deal with some unpleasant factors that need attention and correction. Fateful dates are February 8, 9 and 10. A total reassessment of your values may be in the works.




#### AQUARIUS Jan 20 - Feb 19

The Aquarius new moon on February 2 has Mars involved in the play bringing courage, passion, action and reaction your way. Positive use of the energy is important. It is an excellent time to pioneer something new. The full moon on February 18 brings revelations and clarity.



#### PISCES Feb 20 - Mar 20

Out with the old and in with the new is the basic energy to be dealt with in the first few weeks of February. The Sun enters Pisces on February 18, soon to be followed by Mercury and Mars. This planetary combination will certainly ignite a powerful and dynamic round of activity.








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# Open hearted communication

**Seek first to understand, then to be understood. This principle is the key to effective interpersonal communication.** – *Stephen Covey*

**I**magine a kindergarten class about to have “show and tell.” Every student in the class has a hand up, waving excitedly because each wants to go first. When one finally goes first, a few pay attention, but many are thinking about what they will say when it is their turn. Others are just waiting for the speaker to finish so they can raise their hand quickly and maybe be the lucky one to go next.

When the speaker is done and the teacher tells the class they may now ask questions of the speaker, invariably some students will ignore what the speaker said and rather than ask a question, they simply tell a story of their own. Basically, everyone wants to talk and no one wants to listen. After all, this is kindergarten and children that age are expected to be ego-driven.

Ironically, however, many adult conversations, especially disagreements, seem to be conducted much like our kindergarten students. Each person is arguing their point or position. Rather than really listening to the other or having a real conversation, the discussion is a battle to try to get the other to see things their way and change their mind. No wonder so many couples say they have communication problems.


The word “communication” comes from the root “commune,” which means to be in a state of intimate, heightened sensitivity and receptivity. This would imply a level of closeness and being very open and sensitive not only to the words, but to the intent and the feelings of the other. Being receptive is defined as: able or inclined to receive; especially: open and responsive to ideas, impressions or suggestions.

To truly communicate, we would need to be both sensitive and receptive to the other person. I would suggest that sensitivity and receptivity are higher-level qualities that need to be developed. Indeed, as in our kindergarten example, when very young children like what is happening and things are going their way, it is good. If not, it is bad. Their inner ego-response becomes their compass for assessing where they are in their world.

Of course, this also describes the ego energy often carried into adulthood. Growing up is not synonymous with being evolved. We live in an ego-based culture and one really does need to transcend the values and ways of the culture and often the family of origin to move forward.

We call people heroes when they go out of their way and perhaps even face danger to help another. Mother Teresa, for example, was a model of compassion and unconditional love.

There are countless less famous people who spend their lives listening, learning and understanding the needs of those who are suffering. To my mind, these are people with very open hearts. There is no ego involved here. They only want to help and they desire no recognition.

It is hard to talk to someone who is not open hearted about sensitivity and receptivity. Having meaningful, positive communication is not so much about how we talk, as who we are. For communication to be different, we need to be different. It is not about changing the other person, but striving to change ourselves. 

**Gwen Randall-Young** is an author and psychotherapist in private practice. For articles and information about her books, CDs and the new “Creating Healthy Relationships” series, visit [www.gwen.ca](http://www.gwen.ca) See display ad this issue.

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# Explosives found in World Trade Center dust



**Dr. Niels Harrit**

microscopic red-gray chips in the World Trade Center dust. These chips, at first thought to be paint, were ignited and determined to be unburned nanothermite – an ultra high-tech incendiary explosive, produced by the military and capable of slicing through steel beams.

the major Danish newspapers during the first week of February 2010, was never reported in North America.

The subject continues to haunt the European news. A January 2011 poll by the prestigious Emnid Institute for Welt der Wunder magazine showed that almost 90% of

**Dr. Harrit is the lead scientist of a European, nine-author, peer-reviewed study, which found millions of microscopic red-gray chips in the World Trade Center dust.**

**These chips, at first thought to be paint, were ignited and determined to be unburned nanothermite – an ultra high-tech incendiary explosive, produced by the military...**

Nanothermite contains more energy than dynamite and can be used as rocket fuel.

In light of the new discovery by the Harrit team, the mysterious and disturbing features of the World Trade Center collapses can now be explained: buildings WTC 1, WTC 2, and WTC 7 all fell symmetrically, straight down into their footprints at nearly free-fall speed, producing thousands of tons of pulverized concrete dust.

New York Fire Department Captain Philip Ruvolo reported “molten steel running down the channel rails, like lava.” Weeks later, cranes were pulling red-hot girders, dripping steel, from the rubble piles.

A WTC building engineer was convinced that a bomb went off. He saw a 50-ton hydraulic press in a deep sub-basement of the North Tower “reduced to rubble” by an enormous explosion and a 300-pound steel and concrete door wrinkled up “like a piece of aluminum foil.” The explosion occurred as the plane hit the 95th floor, 92 minutes before the building collapsed.

TV anchors Dan Rather, Wolf Blitzer and Peter Jennings likened the collapses to controlled demolition. Dr. Harrit’s in-depth chemical analysis, combined with the visual and physical features of the collapses, now supports these early impressions. Yet the Harrit team’s paper, which made front-page headlines six times in

German respondents doubt the official account of 9/11.

When asked on Danish national news why he thinks nanothermite caused the collapses, Harrit replied, “Well, it’s an explosive. Why else would it be there? You cannot fudge this kind of science. We have found it. Unreacted thermite... [mixed with the concrete dust from the collapses of the three World Trade Center buildings].”

The issue of how the buildings fell is central to our rationale for being in Afghanistan and Iraq. ◀

**Dr. Niels Harrit** lectured for 34 years at the University of Copenhagen, and has published more than 60 articles in major science journals. He has delivered 90 lectures on the World Trade Center in Sweden, Norway, England, Holland, the US, Australia and Spain.

**Cross-country tour & talks:** Feb 24: Dr. Harrit speaks at UBC, Geography Bldg, Rm 100, 1984 West Mall, 7pm. Feb. 26: UVic, David Lam Auditorium (A144), 7pm. Admission \$10 both cities. Tickets in Victoria available from Ivy’s, Sorenson’s, Tanner’s and Cadboro Bay books. He also speaks in Edmonton, Toronto, Hamilton and London.

\*[www.bentham.org/open/tocpj/articles/V002/7TOCPJ.pdf](http://www.bentham.org/open/tocpj/articles/V002/7TOCPJ.pdf)

**F**or Dr. Niels Harrit, nanotechnology expert and a recently retired University of Copenhagen chemistry professor, it all began when he watched the collapse of the World Trade Center’s Building 7. Harrit watched it come down in amazement, noting, “I had to watch it again... and again. I hit the button 10 times and my jaw dropped lower and lower.”

The 47-storey structure, with a base the size of a football field, was not hit by a plane, but collapsed at free-fall speed seven hours after the Twin Towers, at 5:20 PM. “I had never heard of that building before and there was no visible reason why it should collapse in that way. Straight down, in 6.5 seconds. I have had no rest since that day,” Harrit says.

Dr. Harrit is the lead scientist of a European, nine-author, peer-reviewed study\*, which found millions of

...Rabbit from p. 12

these feelings, such feelings can cause Rabbits to become ill. Rabbits could benefit from more everyday activity, which would reduce their stress levels and better their health.

**Relationships:** Rabbits are very sexual, but tend to give more of themselves than they should. This can lead to unrealistic expectations and unhealthy situations. Rabbits need partners who won’t take advantage of their giving nature. Such pairings will be strong.

**Career:** Rabbits are articulate and good communicators, which is why friends and acquaintances seek out their advice. It’s also why Rabbits make excellent diplomats and politicians. Other good careers for Rabbits include: writer, publisher, actor, fashion designer, therapist, doctor, administrator, public relations and teacher.

**Compatibility:** The Rabbit is most compatible with the Pig and Dog and incompatible with the Rooster and Rat.

Traditional Rabbit attributes and associations:

Zodiac location: 4th

Ruling hours: 5 AM – 7 AM

Direction: East

Season and month: spring, March

Fixed element: wood

Stem: negative

Gemstone: Aquamarine

Colours: Green, aqua

Roughly equivalent western sign: Pisces

Polarity: yin

Ruling Countries: Oman, Iraq, Malaysia, Croatia, Chile, Syria, South Korea

In the related Vietnamese zodiac, the cat takes the place of the rabbit. ▶

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– Arundhati Roy

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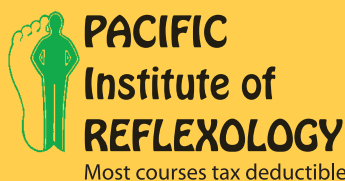
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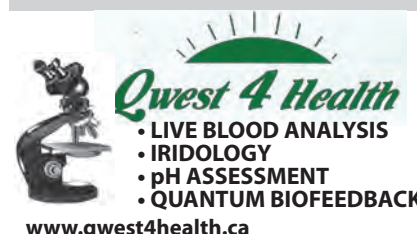
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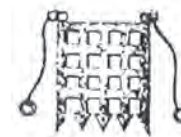
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# Chinese New Year - a window into the Chinese mind

by Ivy Li

**C**hinese culture is a culture of symbolism. If you want a glimpse at how Chinese people think, take a peek at the rituals and symbols of their most important celebration – the Chinese New Year.

The essence of Chinese New Year is, of course, that it is new. The New Year Eve dinner is not only an important family reunion dinner; it is also the dividing line between the new and the old. Before the dinner, the entire house must be cleaned to remove all the evil and bad luck. Once the dinner starts, no sweeping is allowed because it will sweep away all the new good luck that is on its way. Obviously, this "custom" originated with an hygienic purpose. What could be a more effective way of persuading everybody to do a thorough cleaning job than by giving them a deadline with the warning that if they didn't clean, the evil would remain and the good luck would never come?

After dinner, it is time to visit the New Year Eve Flower Market in new clothes and to buy some New Year flowers.

Traditional Chinese paintings focus on capturing the intangible qualities of nature. The delicate plum blossoms, which withstand the cold winter and bloom around the time of New Year, symbolize the much-admired qualities of inner strength and perseverance. The radiant and showy peony, vibrant with extravagance, becomes the symbol for wealth and nobility, a dream shared by many.

A unique language gives rise to a unique way of creating symbols. Each Chinese character is represented by a single sound. On average, an educated Chinese person would recognize about 3,000 characters. The large number of characters means that many of them must share the same sound. Many of the good omen symbols came by this route – association by sound.

*continued p.34...*



# 15 years of GMO contamination in Canada

Over the past 15 years, Canadian farmers' experience with contamination from genetically engineered (GE) crops has exposed the seriousness of the problem. One of the earliest arguments advocating caution in the release of GE plants into the environment was based on the fact we cannot control or recall these living, self-replicating organisms. Our inability to fully predict the path of contamination and its consequences is one reason why genetic engineering is still referred to as one large, living experiment.



The threat of GE alfalfa in 2011 is the most pressing reason why Members of Parliament should vote in support of Bill C-474. The final debate is scheduled for February 7 and the final vote should happen later that week.

Contamination from GE crop plants or other GE organisms can occur through a number of different means, including insect or wind pollination, seed mixing and human error. Commonly, the contamination is not examined before GE crops are approved, partly because the social and economic impacts of contamination are not taken into consideration when government creates regulations. Bill C-474, which will be voted on early this month, would recognize the possible economic cost of contamination by requiring that the government assess export market harm before a new GE seed is permitted.




Contamination from GE crop plants is a reoccurring, predictable problem that can have serious impacts on the livelihood of farmers and the future of organic crops. For example, because of GE contamination organic grain farmers on the Prairies lost organic canola as a market and rotation crop; GE canola contaminated non-GE canola to such a degree that, most, if not all, pedigreed seed growers in Saskatchewan could not warrant their canola seed as GE-free and most, if not all, grain farmers could not warrant their canola crop as free of GE contamination, even if it was planted with GE-free seeds.

For six years, Saskatchewan organic grain farmers tried to establish a class action suit to receive financial compensation from the Monsanto and Bayer corporations for loss of organic canola. Unfortunately, their class action was not certified so the case itself never came to court. Organic canola can now only be grown in a few

geographically isolated areas in Canada, Prince Edward Island being one of them.

Farmers in Canada are still suffering the impacts of the recent GE flax contamination crisis. The long line for testing flax for contamination is delaying delivery of the harvested crop and costing farmers money. In late 2009, our European market for Canadian flax was closed due to the discovery of contamination with a GE flax that was not approved in any of the 36 countries where contamination was reported. Ten years earlier, flax farmers successfully requested the GE flax be taken off the market because they foresaw this exact scenario. Since 2001, it has been illegal to sell the GE flax seed in Canada. Unfortunately, this was not enough to stop the GE contamination.

In two separate incidents of contamination from experimental-stage, unapproved GE pigs in Canada, human error was the cause. In 2002, 11 GE "Enviropig" piglets from the University of Guelph were accidentally sent to a rendering plant and turned into animal feed instead of being destroyed as biological waste. The then university VP of research told the Globe and Mail, "Things you don't expect to happen can happen." In 2004, a similar contamination incident happened in Quebec, with pigs that were genetically engineered to produce pharmaceutical compounds.

While certified organic farmers take strong measures to protect their fields and our food from contamination, this will be virtually impossible if GE alfalfa is planted in North America. The threat of GE alfalfa in 2011 is the most pressing reason why Members of Parliament should vote in support of Bill C-474. The final debate on this Bill is scheduled for February 7 and the final vote should happen later that week. 

Lucy Sharratt is the Coordinator for the Canadian Biotechnology Action Network. Take action on Bill C474 at [www.cban.ca/474](http://www.cban.ca/474)

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Bill C-474 would "require that an analysis of POTENTIAL HARM TO EXPORT MARKETS be conducted before the sale of any new GENETICALLY ENGINEERED SEED is permitted."

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# Returning to the sacred balance



Science Matters David Suzuki with Faisal Moola

**W**e've come through the first decade of the 21st century and it seemed appropriate to revisit a chapter marking the new millennium in my book, *The Sacred Balance* (Greystone Books/DSF, 1997). The following is from the final chapter: "Humanity is an infant species, newly evolved from life's web. And what a magnificent species we are; we can look out and feel spiritually uplifted by the beauty of a forested valley or an ice-coated Arctic mountain, we are overwhelmed with awe at the sight of the star-filled heavens and we are filled with reverence when we enter a sacred place. In the beauty, mystery and wonder that our brain perceives and expresses, we add a special gift to the planet.

But our brash exuberance over our incredible inventiveness and productivity in this century has made us forget where we belong. If we are to balance and direct our remarkable technological muscle power, we need to regain some ancient virtues: the humility to acknowledge how much we have yet to learn, the respect that will allow us to protect and restore nature, and the love that can lift our eyes to distant horizons, far beyond the next election, paycheque or stock dividend. Above all, we need to reclaim our faith in ourselves as creatures of the Earth, living in harmony with all other forms of life. What a sign


of maturity it would be for our species to acknowledge the profound limitations inherent in human knowledge and the destructiveness of our powerful technologies.

The ebb and flow of organisms – fish, birds, mammals, forests – across the Earth's expanses reflect built-in territorial rhythms that are worthy of respect. The elements that have sparked life onto this planet and continue to fuel it – air, water, soil, energy, biodiversity – are sacrosanct and should be treated as such. There is no ignominy in admitting ignorance or in confessing our inability to manage wild things, to control the forces of nature or even to grasp the cosmic forces that shape our lives. Recognizing and accepting these limitations with humility is the birth of wisdom and the beginning of hope that we will finally rediscover our place in the natural order.

When we acknowledge our dependence on the same biophysical factors that support all other life forms, believing that we have the responsibility for "managing" all of it becomes a terrible burden. But if we look at the world through the lenses of all of life together, we may recognize the origins of our destructive path and realize that we are not the "managers;" there is wisdom enough for self-management in the web of living creatures that has survived for more than 3.6 billion years. Instead of trying and failing to manage the life-support systems of the planet,

we... can manage the effect we have on those systems.

Knowing how to act is the first big problem. Many people who are eager to work towards personal and public change feel increasingly baffled by the often contradictory messages from experts, as well as the mantras repeated over and over by the media. We no longer trust our innate common sense or the wisdom of our elders. At this critical juncture in our history on Earth, we are asking the wrong questions. Instead of "How do we reduce the deficit?" or "How do we carve out a niche in the global economy?" we should be asking, "What is an economy for?" and "How much is enough?" What things in life provide joy and happiness, peace of mind and satisfaction? Does the plethora of goods that our economy delivers so effectively provide the route to happiness and satisfaction or do the relationships between human and nonhuman beings still form the core of the important things in life? Is the uniformity of food and other products that we now encounter everywhere on the globe an adequate substitute for the different and unexpected?

We seem to have forgotten the real things that matter and must establish the real bottom line of non-negotiable needs in order to regain a balance with our surroundings. 

[www.davidsuzuki.org](http://www.davidsuzuki.org)

## It's getting hot in the forest

**Dialogues for Legal Innovation Series:  
Law Reform for Nature, Climate, and Communities: February 16, 2011**

Please join **West Coast Environmental Law** at this important community dialogue event where we will explore how BC's forestry, mining, parks and other resource and land-use laws should evolve in light of climate change.

At the Wosk Centre for Dialogue in Vancouver on the evening of February 16th, 2011, from 6:30 to 9:30 pm. The event is free (or by donation), but pre-registration is required. Details and registration information at <http://wcel.org/dialogue>, or call 604-601-2511.

**Let's talk about giving BC's forests and species a fighting chance in the face of climate change.**



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# From cyber*crime* to cyber*crusade*

WikiLeaks  
Politricks  
Hacktivism  
& *Art*

*I think of art, at its most significant, as a DEW line, a Distant Early Warning system that can always be relied on to tell the old culture what is beginning to happen to it. – Marshall McLuhan, 1964*

William Gibson's 1982 sci-fi story *Burning Chrome* contained the memorable line, "The street finds its own uses for things." Hustlers, hackers, retailers, crooks and activists will always find off-label uses for hi-tech products and services, the author predicted. His aphorism proved to be prescient. In 1992, an American hacker by the name of Timothy C. May wrote *The Crypto Anarchist Manifesto*, concerning the real world of anonymity, encryption and how young "cypherpunks" might hack, crack and prank the powers that be.

The hacker-as-hero meme reached full fictional expression in the 1999 Hollywood film, *The Matrix*. The central character, Neo, spends his free time breaking code for a motley collection of customers. One day, he is approached by a mysterious figure who hints that Neo's world, and his own identity, are just lines of computer code. The part-time hacker confirms the terrible truth by swallowing the "red pill," which leads him down the rabbit hole and toward confrontation with Agent Smith, the sharp-pleated guardian of *The Matrix*.

By the beginning of the new millennium, real-world, illegal computer hacking had become as much a law enforcement issue as a science fiction theme. Most criminal hackers snagged by police turned out to be fairly miserable specimens compared to Keanu Reeves' bullet-dodging archetype. Many had an obsessive-compulsive desire to test the limits of the system, but few were motivated by a need to expose official secrets and lies. Yet the theme of the heroic hacker continued to be a pop culture fixture. It recently jumped the gender barrier in Stieg Larsson's *Millennium* Trilogy, with his motorcycle-riding Goth hacker, Lisbeth Salander.

It was only a matter of time before life would seemingly imitate art. WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange could just as well have come straight out of Hollywood central casting: an articulate, globe-trotting publisher, journalist and Internet activist with mutating hair and no fixed address; a guy who lives out of a laptop, upending secrecy-shrouded apple carts as he navigates an official crackdown on his activities.

Born in Queensland, Australia, in 1971, Julian

Paul Assange was raised in an itinerant lifestyle in a Queensland New Age community. His stepfather has described him as "a very sharp kid" with "a keen sense of right and wrong." Assange is currently on bail and under house arrest in England, pending an extradition hearing early in February for his part in distributing a quarter-million secret State Department cables.

"To us, in this little underground subculture we belong to, the man is a hero, he has done what most of us have been trying to do or dream of doing, since the early 90s at least," writes one self-proclaimed hacker in an online forum.

The reaction from official circles has been every bit as passionate. "Illegally shoot the son-of-a-bitch," ranted Democrat Bob Beckel on FOX News Network.



Kids who have spent most of their lives  
with computers are now young adults.

By becoming Internet activists, a tiny  
fraction of them have voluntarily  
fallen into roles that strangely mirror  
the fantastic tales of their childhood.

Digital whistle blowing organizations  
other than WikiLeaks (such as  
[openleaks.com](http://openleaks.com) and [crowdleak.net](http://crowdleak.net)) are  
cropping up around the world.

The *Washington Times* insists he should be treated as "enemy combatant," and US vice president Joe Biden says he is a "hi-tech terrorist." Sarah Palin wants Assange "pursued with the same urgency we pursue al-Qaeda and Taliban leaders."

To author Webster Tarpley and Internet radio host Alex Jones, the WikiLeaks founder is a mind-controlled "zombie" and intelligence community "asset," playing his part in some obscure covert operation. The soft-

spoken character appears to be the ultimate, information-age Rorschach blot. He's the perfect shape for our projections, ranging from cyber-saint to serial rapist. (The efforts to extradite Assange to Sweden for "sex by surprise" appear to originate in the suspect grievances of two women who had consensual sex with Assange at separate times. If he is guilty of anything in this regard, it is probably a computer nerd's clumsiness with interpersonal relationships and possessing an ego commensurate with his crusade.)

Assange began hacking at the age of 16 under the name "Mendax," Latin for "nobly untruthful." After police raided his Melbourne home in 1991, the 20-year-old was found to have accessed computers belonging to an Australian university, the Canadian telecom company Nortel and even the USAF 7th Command Group in the Pentagon. In 1992, he pleaded guilty to two dozen charges of hacking and was released after being fined AU\$2100.

By his late thirties, the sometimes-blond Assange could have settled back with some lucrative security consulting work. Instead, he opted to dive into murky waters patrolled by the hammerhead sharks of official secrecy. He and a crew of like-minded activists introduced WikiLeaks in 2007 as a means for military, government and corporate whistleblowers to reach the world anonymously. Positioning itself as a news organization, WikiLeaks reported on corruption and death squads in the government of Kenya and revealed the illegal dumping of toxic wastes on the Ivory Coast, allegedly by ships chartered by the oil-trading firm Trafigura. The organization released the military manual from Guantanamo Bay, as well as the Australian government's list of World Wide Web "black sites," a move that likely killed the first efforts in the AngloAmerican world to control free speech on the Internet.

In 2008, the organization won *The Economist* magazine's New Media Award. In June 2009, WikiLeaks and its leader won Amnesty International's UK Media Award. Assange recently told Swedish television, "If you engage in immoral or unjust behaviour, it will be found out. It will be revealed and you will suffer the consequences."

Assange's fate is now tied to that of Private Bradford Manning, a 23-year-old military analyst who served in Iraq in 2010 and claims he was distressed by indications of crime and corruption. "If you had free reign over classified networks for long periods of time... say, 8-9 months... and you saw incredible



In June 2009, WikiLeaks and its leader won Amnesty International's UK Media Award. Assange recently told Swedish television, "If you engage in immoral or unjust behaviour, it will be found out."

things, awful things... things that belonged in the public domain, and not on some server stored in a dark room in Washington DC... What would you do?" wrote Manning after passing on hundreds of thousands of classified documents to WikiLeaks.

Ironically, there was little computer hacking involved in Manning's illegal activity, in the strictest sense. It was just a conscience-stricken soldier with a blank disc at one end and a team of activists at the other. "We make a commitment to our sources that we will represent their material to the public to the best of our ability and achieve maximum political impact for the risk they take," Assange said.

In April of 2010, WikiLeaks released the horrifying video from a 2007 incident in which Iraqi civilians were killed by a US helicopter gunship, among them a Reuters cameraman. The "Collateral Damage" video elicited enormous interest from global media, giving Assange leverage for the next series of revelations. He managed to convince the senior editors of the *Guardian*, the *New York Times* and *Der Spiegel* to publish the rest of the material in a coordinated fashion. By default, this made Assange something of a co-editor to some of the biggest media operations in the world.

In July of 2010, WikiLeaks released the so-called Afghan War Diary, which contained 76,900 documents about the War in Afghanistan. In October, the so-called Iraq War Logs were released, revealing the widespread use of torture by Iraqi allies and the 122,000 civilian deaths since the coalition's occupation of Iraq. The material demonstrates the immense gap between public boilerplate and diplomatic chatter and it will keep historians busy for years to come. Some of the tales from the State Department cables, which soon followed, seem halfway between a Noam Chomsky lecture and a Jason Bourne film. (To take just one example, US State Department head Hillary Clinton ordered her diplomats

to steal credit card numbers and biometric information – fingerprints, facial images, iris scans and DNA – from UN officials, including Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon.)

As yet, critics have produced no evidence to support the contention that "WikiLeaks endangers lives." It might be more accurate to say WikiLeaks endangers *lies*. The controversy over issues of legality and jurisdiction extends beyond one man, or two. It's about the relationship of new media to old media and the enormous shear forces between infinitely copyable digital information and the compartmentalization-mad secrecy of the national security state. It's also, I believe, about a generational battle.

Last month, Visa, MasterCard, PayPal and the Bank of America decided to stop processing donations to WikiLeaks, apparently bowing to pressure from the US government. In retaliation, a loosely coordinated, global network of young computer activists, "Anonymous," engineered "denial of service" attacks against the two credit card companies. A 16-year-old Dutch boy was arrested on suspicion of involvement with the group. This illegal act, not surprisingly, has re-energized calls for policing the Internet, but it's going to be difficult to put the genie back in the bottle and instruct young people to delete years of cultural programming from their subconscious mainframes.

For some time, children across the globe have been raised on pop culture tales about power, greed, secrecy and lies. These morality plays often involve characters with super powers, attained through magic or technology that is indistinguishable from magic. Think of Jack Kirby's Marvel comic books, George Lucas' *Star Wars* franchise or J.K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series. At the same time, young people have been learning their way around technology that would have been considered supernatural in their grandparents' time.

Kids who have spent most of their lives with

computers are now young adults. By becoming Internet activists, a tiny fraction of them have voluntarily fallen into roles that strangely mirror the fantastic tales of their childhood. Digital whistle blowing organizations other than WikiLeaks (such as OpenLeaks, Crowdleaks, BalkanLeaks, BrusselsLeaks, IsraeliLeaks and PirateLeaks) are cropping up around the world, tended by a generation of young programmers and activists.

As anyone with a four-year-old knows, children quickly outpace their parents when it comes to gadgetry. A recent *New York Times* article predicts the time is coming when 25-year-olds will be "old fogeys" compared to 12-year-olds, who will trounce them in tech skills. What does this mean for the future of secrecy? Without a global, Red Chinese-style crackdown on computer networks, it might become increasingly difficult to monitor leaks – especially if idealistic young pups are capable of new tricks that can't be taught to cynical, old dogs. The question then, as it is now, will remain the same: once unpleasant state and corporate secrets are revealed, will the rest of the world care enough to demand change?

As in any good hacker thriller, Julian Assange has rigged things to blow up. As a form of 'insurance,' the remaining unredacted State Department cables have been distributed to 100,000 people worldwide and key parts will be released if, in his words, "anything happens to me." Meanwhile, young Bradford Manning, a nearly forgotten figure in this drama, sits in solitary confinement awaiting sentencing for revealing state secrets. "God knows what happens now," the 23-year-old wrote in an unverified chat log, after releasing secret cables to WikiLeaks. "Hopefully worldwide discussion, debate and reforms. Or maybe I'm just young, naïve and stupid." ❏

[www.goeffolson.co](http://www.goeffolson.co)



The character for 'Bat' (蝠) has the same sound as the character 福, a word that means blessings, good tidings and good fortune. Therefore, stylized graphical drawings of bat become a symbol of "blessings, good tidings and good fortune." The character for 'fish' (魚) shares the same sound as the character 餘 a word that means extra or more than enough. So drawings of fish, especially in pairs, become the symbol for plentiful.

A unique language gives rise to a unique way of creating symbols.

Each Chinese character is represented by a single sound. On average, an educated Chinese person would recognize about 3,000 characters. The large number of characters means that many of them must share the same sound. Many of the good omen symbols came by this route – association by sound.

And by the way, what is a good excuse to eat New Year Pudding other than it is delicious? Pudding (糕) has the same sound as 高, a character that means high up, tall or above. So if you consume some New Year Pudding, you will "make advancement" in career, academic studies or whatever in every New Year.

The rich symbolic meanings of Chinese New Year are reflections of the people's fears, wishes and their coping mechanisms. But behind all of these, there is kindness and love. In keeping with its spirit and tradition, let me say: 恭賀新禧 如意吉祥, 天下泰平. (Happy New Year / Wish you health and safety, and may your wish come true / World Peace). ◀

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# Of Gods and Men

L: Amédée  
(Jacques  
Herlin).

R: Luc (Michael  
Lonsdale).

Photo courtesy  
Sony Picture  
Classics.



To stay or not to stay? That is the question at the centre of slow-burn, immersive drama *Of Gods and Men* (*Des Hommes et Des Dieux*). The men are eight monks living harmoniously in a local community in Muslim North Africa. As Cistercian-Trappists, they refrain from all proselytizing, practising a devotional life within their minimalist monastery, farming and providing support – medical support, in particular – to the local village.

However, as violence escalates, Islamic militants threaten to kidnap and quite possibly kill them. In such a situation, any peace-loving individual would probably head right back to France. But these are monks. And while self-preservation is very much at the forefront of their minds, and of the authorities that fear they will become pawns in the militants' game, the brothers have a strong attachment to their monastery and a sense of responsibility to the local villagers who want them to stay.

The issue becomes not so much about life and death, but the quality of that life and death and, of course, the life after death their decisions will inform. The film is based on a real event – an imagining of the last days of a group of monks of Tibhirine in Algeria, who were kidnapped and killed in 1996 – so there is a certain inevitability to the conclusion. But the process by which the men choose their fate is fascinating, as each one's faith, courage and humanity is brought into sharp focus by the threat of violence and their need to choose the appropriate, morally correct response.

I have to admit that, initially, the long scenes depicting the monks' daily life made me a bit fidgety. The cinematography, in its look and composition, is perfectly austere as if a monk had got behind the camera. But these documentary-like scenes of chants and ceremony have a purity that evokes the pace and orderliness of the men's lives that is in stark contrast to the sudden violence occasionally glimpsed beyond the peace of the sanctuary. Director Xavier Beauvois understands that these scenes of monastic rhythm and ritual illustrate, better than words can, the strength of the brotherhood's bonds.

A high quality ensemble cast also ensures that, although there is little individual back-story, we get a strong sense of each brother's conflicts through their meetings or "chapters" and interactions with local people. Michael Lonsdale, who incongruously also played the villain Drax in 007 flick *Moonraker*, gives a rich performance as the philosophical, elderly doctor Luc. Lambert Wilson, as the ascetic leader Christian, gives the impression of deep waters running within and Olivier Rabourdin gives a moving performance as the younger, energetic monk, who seems to have the most at stake. This combination of brilliant actors and a restrained, almost mystical directorial vision means that the film gradually grows in potency. The images it creates stay with you for a long time.

Look out also for *A Drummer's Dream* (Vancity, February 4-10 and NFB.ca), a documentary following a retreat of sorts of master drummers on a remote farm in rural Ontario. It's obviously got huge appeal for drummers, but reviewers say the passion and virtuosity of the drummers will win over mainstream audiences too. ◀

Robert Alstead made the Vancouver documentary *You Never Bike Alone*. [www.youneverbikealone.com](http://www.youneverbikealone.com). He writes at [www.2020Vancouver.com](http://www.2020Vancouver.com)



# CRTC to OK web metering

**A**s I write this column, I'm doing what I often do when I'm on deadline; I'm surfing the web! It's like any other day on the Internet; people are finding creative ways to express themselves by making YouTube videos, posting on Facebook, connecting through Twitter and conversing on public forums.

But if you look a little closer, you'll notice a heightened urgency around the Internet these days. It turns out much of the recent noise online is the result of people flooding the Internet with information about the CRTC's latest move, the decision to allow big telecom companies like Rogers, Shaw and Telus to implement what's called usage-based billing.

Usage-based billing (UBB), which has also been described as Internet metering, means that users are charged a penalty on top of their regular monthly bill for exceeding a predetermined threshold of bandwidth use.

Those who produce art, independent news or Internet video or use the Internet as a research tool, along with people who use video services like Netflix or iTunes or play online games, may already have a special bill in the mail waiting for them.

The hit to the average Internet user's pocketbook is one thing, but perhaps just as important is the question of how Canada's next online innovator will afford to pay for this metered Internet. This question reveals what usage-based billing really is – a tax on creativity, innovation and free expression.

Maybe all the innovators will move to the US, but many suspect Canada is just a test bed for big telecom control. If they can pull it off here, the US telecoms can't be far behind.


To make matters worse, many suspect these impending overage fees are actually the first step toward ISPs charging us per byte, as they currently do with data plans for smart phones. Imagine sharing your Internet connection in your home or workplace, as many do now, and having to pay for every byte each person uses.

If you're thinking of switching to an indie ISP, that's a good idea for other reasons, but keep in mind the recent CRTC decision allows big telecom companies to force small independent ISPs to adopt the same pricing scheme as the big players. So if the CRTC's decision prevails, Internet users will have no choice to pay these new usage fees. They'll have nowhere to turn.

One student in Montreal has already been charged \$1,800 in "overage" fees after her Internet connection was hacked by her neighbours.

Stories like this have Canadians in a bit of a frenzy. Since the Commission's decision, nearly 40,000 people have signed the online StopTheMeter.ca petition – possibly the most popular campaign targeted at a telecom issue in Canada's history.

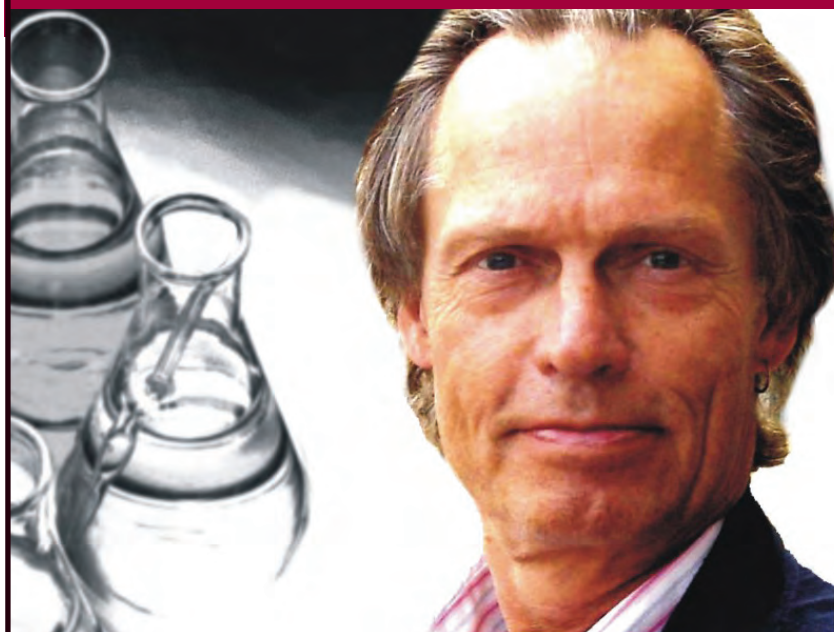
Politicians are starting to pick up on all the online activity. Late last year, the City of Vancouver, led by Councillor Andrea Reimer, adopted a motion calling for the CRTC to prevent big telecom companies from imposing UBB on Internet users. On January 20, MP Charlie Angus and the NDP put out a release calling for new rules to protect consumers from usage-based billing.

The CRTC has allowed UBB to enter our communication system, but its decisions can be reversed and legislation can be passed that safeguards independent ISPs and Internet users. Canadians can come together and participate in campaigns, such as the petition at [www.stopthemeteter.ca](http://www.stopthemeteter.ca), and show politicians and regulators that they won't accept anything less than a fully open and affordable Internet. 

**Steve Anderson** is the national coordinator for OpenMedia.ca. He has written for **The Tyee**, **Toronto Star**, **Epoch Times** and **Adbusters**.

[steve@openmedia.ca](mailto:steve@openmedia.ca), [www.FacebookSteve.com](http://www.FacebookSteve.com), [www.SteveOnTwitter.com](http://www.SteveOnTwitter.com)

## Explosive evidence



**Dr. Harrit** lectured for 34 years at the University of Copenhagen, and has published over 60 articles in major science journals. He has delivered 90 lectures on the World Trade Center in Sweden, Norway, England, Holland, the USA, Australia, and Spain. His multi-media presentation will be fascinating to both scientists and lay people.

**Dr. Niels Harrit** will discuss the trigger event for Afghanistan and Iraq: the Twin Towers and Building 7, and will present irrefutable peer-reviewed evidence from 9 researchers and scientists, proving the presence of thermite incendiary explosive in the dust sample collected from the collapse of World Trade Center on September 11, 2001.

**Vancouver** Thurs, Feb 24, 7pm  
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**People's Co-Op Books** 1391 Commercial Drive 604-253-6442  
**UBC Bookstore** 6200 University Boulevard 604-822-2665

**Victoria** 7pm, Sat, Feb 26, doors 6:30pm  
David Lam Auditorium, Rm A144, McLaurin Building, UVic  
**Tickets**

**Ivy's Books** 2188 Oak Bay Ave 250-598-2713  
**Sorenson's Books** 1027 Cook St., 250-383-3215  
**Tanner's Books** 2436 Beacon Ave Sidney, 250-656-2345  
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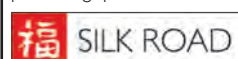
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# Datebook

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**FEB 8, 12, 18-20**

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**FEB 11 & 12-13**

**FEB 11: Free demo of effective pain elimination** with Colette Stefan. See the Yuen Method Work on the Spot. White Rock, Whitby's Books, 14833 Marine Dr. 1-888-536-3711. **FEB 12-13: Level 1 Class**, \$525 incl. tax. Vancouver, Georgia Room, Best Western Chateau Granville, 1100 Granville St. [www.crystallinevision.com](http://www.crystallinevision.com) colette@crystallinevision.com 1-306-584-9135.

**FEB 16**

**It's Getting Hot in the Forest: Dialogues** for Legal Innovation Series - Law Reform for Nature, Climate & Communities. Please join West Coast Environmental Law at the

Work Centre for Dialogue, Vancouver, 6:30-9:30PM, Free or by donation. Pre-registration required. Details <http://wcel.org/dialogue> or call 604-601-2511.

**FEB 17**

**Founder David Schmidt** explains Pain relief, Anti-Aging, Sleep benefits. Experience Lifewave patches demonstrated. Samples. Century Plaza Hotel & Spa, 1015 Burrard St., Vancouver, 7PM. RSVP to Christine 604-767-3834 [vancouverlifewave@gmail.com](mailto:vancouverlifewave@gmail.com)

**FEB 18**

**Introduction to Foot Reflexology** commences Certificate Weekend Training Course. Introduction 7.30pm \$10; Course \$395. Pacific Institute of Reflexology (604) 875-8818. [www.pacificreflexology.com](http://www.pacificreflexology.com)

**FEB 20**

**J.Krishnamurti: Exploring the Essence of Love - Thought & Disorder.** DVD & Dialogue Series 4PM, Planetarium. \$5. 778-330-6639.

**FEB 21**

**Past Life Exploration- Health Talk & Workshop** 1-5pm. Experience a journey into YOUR PAST to understand/heal your Present. West Vancouver, \$75. Registration: [www.lifebetweenlives.ca/Events](http://www.lifebetweenlives.ca/Events)

**FEB 22**

**The Silva Method:** Free. Introductory Conference Vancouver, 7 PM. B.C.I.T. Downtown Campus. Stress & Anxiety Management. Think Out of the Box. Live Silva Course: 2 Saturdays, March 5 & 12, 10-6PM. [www.silvamethod-Canada.com](http://www.silvamethod-Canada.com)

**FEB 23**

**Fill Your Workshops With Ease:** Avoid the 3 massive mistakes workshop leaders make. Presented by Callan Rush. Tickets free when you pre-register. In Vancouver. Call Katie at 1-888-686-7409. Also in Kelowna Feb. 16 & Feb. 24 in Victoria.

**FEB 24 & FEB 26**

**9/11 Truth: Dr. Niels Harrit** nanotechnology expert & lead scientist of a study re World Trade Center speaks at UBC, Geography

Building, Room 100, 1984 West Mall, 7 PM. Feb. 26: UVic, David Lam Auditorium (A144), 7 PM. Admission \$10 both cities. Tickets in Victoria available from Ivy's, Sorenson's, Tanner's and Cadboro Bay books. He also speaks in Edmonton, Toronto, Hamilton and London.

**FEB 27**

**UFOS: Their Spiritual Mission.** Free screening / Q&A of a talk by British author Benjamin Creme. 2PM, Roundhouse Community Centre (Pacific @ Davie). 604.983.0926.

**MAR 1**

**Psychology of Vision** Presentation with Chuck Spezzano. Changing your heart and mind can change your world. 7-10PM, Sandman Hotel, Vancouver City Centre. Tickets \$34 by Feb. 27. \$40/door. Tickets through Psychology of Vision: 604-298-4011 or 604-526-6000 or at Banyen.

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**MAR 12-13**

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**MAR 15-16**

**Yoga & Meditation Lectures** by Paramhans Swami Maheshwarananda. Unitarian Church, 949 W. 49th Ave., 7PM. Enrich your spirit; feel the presence of an enlightened yoga master. [www.vanyoga.com](http://www.vanyoga.com) 604-646-0134.

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## MAR 25-26

**Osho Meditation Retreat** with Swami Anand Arun from Nepal. St. Mark's Church, 1805 Larch Street, Kitsilano, 10AM-5PM, \$35/day, www.tapoban.com, www.justdance.ca Info/ Tickets: (604) 925-3537, Rubai or Sumiran.

## March 25-27

**Family Constellation Weekend** facilitated by renowned facilitator & therapist Claus Kostka. Inter-generational healing. Vancouver. Early bird prices before Feb 28. www.familyconstellation.com  
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## SUNDAYS

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## RETREATS

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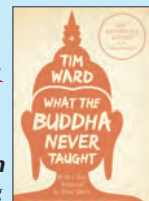
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## Talks/Booksignings at Banyen

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- **Shadi Mogadime** *Creating Your Dreams* **Feb. 13**
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# Millennium Development Goals

## – *Love in action*

I hear a lot of people say we have to wake people up, convince them of the urgency of this moment, make them realize that the planet is headed for disaster!

But I don't see it that way. Anybody who needs to be woken up at this point is so deeply asleep that they're not the target audience for global activism. We don't need to wake the sleeping so much as we need to harness the energy of those who are already awake. Enough people know we're in trouble; what they want to know is what to do about it.

We're living at a time when whole systems break down, calling for a whole systems response. It's not just outer change but also inner change that's called for. It's not just that this is wrong or that that is wrong. The entire direction of human civilization is wrong, as we have placed economic principles before humanitarian values and in so doing have placed the very survival of the human race at risk.

Human civilization as we know it is like the Titanic headed for the iceberg, whether the iceberg be nuclear,



**We can learn to love each other. We can be conduits for the miraculous.**

**We can stop playing small and start playing large. We can stop giving in to our weaknesses and start claiming our strengths. We can tell truth to power.**

environmental or terrorism-related. The probability vectors for the next 20 years are grim and our job is to turn the probability vectors into possibility vectors – in other words, we have to turn this ship around.

In every advanced mammalian species that survives and thrives, a common anthropological characteristic is the fierce behavior of the adult female of the species when she senses a threat to her cubs. The lioness, the tigress and the mama bear are all examples. The fact that the adult human female is so relatively complacent before the collective threats to the young of our species bespeaks a lack of proactive intention for the human race to survive.

Yet how things have been has no inherent bearing on how things have to be and I think we're living at a time when Western womanhood is just a moment away from emerging into the light of our collective possibil-

ity. Especially given the relative lack of power – even basic rights – given to millions of women in other parts of the world, we have a particular responsibility to speak up not only for ourselves but for them as well. And we are ready. Maybe not all of us, but enough of us. Western women should be a moral force on this planet. We should not be infantilized; we should not be pretending we don't know what's going on; we should not be giving in to the various and ubiquitous temptations to anesthetize ourselves. Quite the opposite, we should be taking the wheel of human civilization and saying to anyone who will listen: We're turning the ship around and we're turning it around NOW.

One thing we should all be aware of is the Millennium Development Goals, a set of eight goals signed on to by all 189 members of the United Nations in the year 2000. The goals are important because they speak to the underlying causes of so many of our most important problems, addressing them on a global level and giving everyone the chance to monitor how we're doing as a species.

The goals are a road map to cutting absolute poverty in half, improving health, getting children in school and reducing disease by 2015. When we think of "women's issues," we should be thinking of these issues. They should be our concern as the mothers of the world, the lovers of the world and the leaders of the world.

Specifically, the goals are these:

- 1) Cut Extreme Poverty and Hunger in Half
- 2) Achieve Universal Primary Education
- 3) Promote Gender Equality and Empower Women
- 4) Reduce Child Mortality by Two-Thirds
- 5) Cut Maternal Mortality by Three-Fourths
- 6) Halt and Reverse the Spread of HIV/AIDS, Malaria, TB and Other Diseases
- 7) Ensure Environmental Sustainability
- 8) Develop a Global Partnership for Development

We are four years away from 2015, the year we are supposed to achieve the Millennium Goals. We are making progress but not fast enough. We need an accelerated sense of urgency from our decision makers. And nothing would make that happen more effectively than for the women of [North] America to learn this information, to take it to heart and to refuse to shut up about it. No matter what else you're doing to make the world a better place, add a P.S. about The Millennium Goals.

Facts to consider: Putting a child in school is one of the most powerful things we can do to reduce poverty. An educated child earns more later in life, knows how to keep their own children from dying, produces more food, is less likely to get AIDS, and in the case of boys, is less likely to engage in armed civil conflict.

And we already know how to address the problems of AIDS, TB and Malaria; we just need to do more of it via mechanisms like the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria.

Educate yourself. Look at [www.un.org/millennium-goals/](http://www.un.org/millennium-goals/) Use your own platform or create one. Consider ways to help spread the word. [www.results.org/](http://www.results.org/) Use Facebook and Twitter and every other way you have of building a buzz about something that could matter to the lives – even the survival – of millions of people. And some of those

people might someday be your own grandchildren.

Then, when it's all handled, when 17,000 children a day are no longer dying of hunger; when the ecosystems of the planet are well on their way to restoration; when nuclear bombs are scarce if not completely gone; when females of the world are no longer treated like chattel; and the nations of the world are beginning to achieve a real and lasting peace; then, we can celebrate. But until then, we should mourn.

Anyone who's looking at the world and not grieving isn't conscious; but anyone who's looking at the world and not rejoicing in the possibilities for how we can turn all this around is underestimating what human beings can do. We can learn to love each other. We can be conduits for the miraculous. We can stop playing small and start playing large. We can stop giving in to our weaknesses and start claiming our strengths. We can tell truth to power. We can act like we mean it. We can never, never, never give up. We can be the mothers and the fathers of a new and better world. And all of this is possible because human beings can decide. We can decide to say something. We can decide to write an email. We can decide to step up and participate. But we must decide now, not later. There is no more time to waste.



Marianne Williamson speaks at the I Can Do It event, March 12-13, Queen Elizabeth Theatre, Vancouver. [www.icandoit.net](http://www.icandoit.net) [www.mariannewilliamson.com](http://www.mariannewilliamson.com)

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